7:Tobe C,T-3 (1959)1960 AV7 Burusho AV7
Hunza

done and he turns on his television set, he is bombarded with commercials that seek to hypnotize his brain by making him believe he needs those products, when in reality he needs them like a hole in the head? Can a man know the meaning of true leisure when his head is throbbing with the bills he must meet on the morrow, the food he must buy and the clothing he must procure for his family, for which in many cases ready money is not available? Can a man who is harassed by and has pressing about him a hundred problems that must be reckoned with, find leisure or peace by escaping to the country for a weekend or by taking to drink?

Of course not! True relaxation and leisure are as far away from him as the moon!

Therefore, when I say that the people of Hunza know and enjoy the true thrill of leisure, I mean every word of it sincerely. While they rise at 3.30 or 4 o'clock in the morning, they go to bed between 7 and 8, and in the winter time even earlier, if there is no celebration or dancing in the village. They are without doubt the most industrious people that I have met—especially in the East. Laziness is positively foreign to Hunza!

Wherever I went I noticed that the Hunzans had ample time to talk and chat, and seldom did they appear to be in a hurry although whenever they walked, their walk was brisk—much more so than the average Western gait. In fact, this is one of their most recognizable and admired traits.

Lest anyone should get the impression that life in Hunza is dull, let me clearly emphasize that there is great fellowship between families and the selfsame group-gathering that we know of in our way of life is also practiced and followed by the people of Hunza. Further, religious gatherings are quite frequent and play an important role in the social life of the people.

526 481 I do know, however, that tennis is played in Hunza because the Mir has a tennis court in an area around the garden. I also know that swimming is practiced because I saw a swimming pool at the Mir's summer home at Altit.

It was July when I was in Hunza and not one single person did I see swimming in either the Gilgit or Hunza Rivers or, for that matter, in any of the nullahs or creeks we passed.

I will admit that we had our feet soaked in most of them—some deliberately when resting and others in crossing, chiefly on foot because I didn't trust my horse. He has four slender legs with any of which he can get into trouble. I have only two to watch and worry over and they are sturdy and stocky, of the "Pict" type.

133 526 It would take a mighty good man or boy to swim in the nullahs in Hunza or the surrounding area: first, because the icy waters of the rivers or nullahs would freeze you to death in no time flat. The water, winter and summer, never gets much higher than the freezing point and I doubt if any human being or even these human polar bears could stand water like that. Besides, there are no clear calm patches that are without a devastating current.

From scrutinizing the area, I doubt very much if there are very many places along the entire reaches of the Hunza River that can be forded, even with mighty good animals, capable of swimming, at least during the spring and summer. I know of one well prepared expedition that tried to cross one of these rivers and came to grief.

526 Polo is the national game or sport of Hunza and of practically all the principalities in that area . . . and, brother, it is a wild and woolly game as played by these

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zan. And it wasn't because I was smart. There obviously was a distinct difference and anyone could pick out a Hunzan from a Nagirwal or any of the other citizens thereabout. 124

Much has been said about the walking habits of the people of Hunza . . . the long distances, the climbs, their endurance and their sprightly gait. I have had little experience with their endurance, but of their gait I can speak with some degree of authority. They have the lightest, easiest walk or pace that I have seen anywhere in my life. They seem to glide or spring effortlessly. If any people on the face of the earth have learned to walk without wasting any energy, I believe the people of Hunza have learned that secret. That's the only way I can account for our guides, for example, being in exactly the same condition when they finished their day's travel as when they started. I fully realize that they are accustomed to doing this. On occasions at home I have walked 12 miles at one march—and enjoyed it—but I was tired and mighty glad to take a good rest when I reached my goal. 481 [147]

I cannot recall one occasion where I saw a Hunzan resting after a walk. I practically retraced every foot of my journey back and forth and also the side excursions, but I couldn't find one occasion on which the Hunzan men had to rest. They not only seemed, but actually were, totally imperturbable, nonchalant and at ease wherever they went. Their stride was livelier and lighter than anything I have ever seen. [147]

Furthermore they never slouched, whether walking, standing or sitting. No matter where you saw them, they held their heads erect and chests out. [516]

Now this is not an afterthought because I began my search and observations the moment I left Gilgit. They didn't walk—they seemed to float! I wish I knew their

481 secret . . . but perhaps it isn't a secret! It's most likely inherent—they have it when they're born.

000 The closest thing to the Hunzan gait that I ever saw was in Agra where the famed Taj Mahal is located. There were a couple of hours unfilled in our time schedule, so we took a stroll through the city. What a city! (But that is another story.) My eyes were rolling like a man in a delirium to take in all of the scenes that were going on about me. When I heard what sounded like a song or a chant, I turned about trying to find the source of the merriment or music, and then I saw the source. I stood and waited and a troop of men passed by in front of me, single file and spread about 10 feet apart. Most of them wore but a loin cloth; the day was hot and sunny. On their shoulders they carried a wooden yoke, that stretched out on either side about a foot from their shoulders. From each end there hung a string and at the end of the string was a platter. The entire affair resembled a balance—the kind that justice is supposed to bear. On each of the platters stood a bottle with a fluid in it. The gait of these men was light, flowing and even; the men were all singing.

I stood and watched them file past me. There were about 70 of them. I looked about me, searching for someone who could explain these goings-on. A few inquiries led me to a native lady of the upper caste who spoke fluent English. She told me that these men had been to the Ganges 60 miles away and they were carrying holy water in the glass containers that were placed on the balanced platters. Their load could not be put down until they reached their destination. They had already gone 60 miles and some had a mile or two more to go and others had 10 miles and some even 50 more miles. They could transfer their load to some other willing helper, but it must not touch the ground.

These men were carrying water from the holy of holies—the Ganges. They were intoxicated—not with wine, but with their faith. They were excited with the mysticism of their god; they were inspired; they were in seventh heaven. Yes, the gait of these divinely influenced people was close to the pace followed by the people of Hunza.

If I had seen somewhere along in my travels a Hunzan who slouched, dragged himself or in some other way showed a sign of weakness or debility, I would say so, but no such Hunzan did I see.

I fully realize that I scoffed at my Hunzan bearer that the Mir sent along with me from Kerimabad to Nomal, especially when he wanted to take the horses back from Chalt and leave us because he said he had blisters on his feet, due to the exceptionally hard push we had made that day, but remember, he was 20 years older than I! His feet probably told his age but he certainly didn't look it.

If there are sick and infirm men in Hunza, they must be exceptionally well-hidden, because I didn't see or find any.

Then, too, writers and observers of the people of Hunza always mention and stress the fact that they are a happy pleasant people. To this I must also assent. I did not see a sad or disgruntled Hunzan. I do not mean to suggest that they ran about the streets giggling and laughing, but they were of cheery, amiable countenance. Here I am going beyond those with whom I walked and talked and ate; I am delving into the citizenry that I passed on the roads or streets, those whose farms and homes we visited and also those whom I observed in passing.

Let me here illustrate another point. For example, it is understandable that we here in America, or people

as his trophy room. There, neatly laid on a long table, was a beautiful ornate set of silverware, a three piece tea service. It was the most unusual and elaborate design I'd ever seen. I recognized it as the leaf of the chenar tree, which is similar to our maple. I do not profess to be a connoisseur or one who appreciates objects of art, but I did recognize this as being something especially fine and unusual. 123 [415]

He said, "This is from the Rani and I. I hope your wife will like it!"

He then presented me with a most unusual cane. It is made out of some native Hunzan wood, white in color—chenar I imagine. The handle is made very ingeniously, so that you have something to hold firmly in your hand, as well as a place to rest your thumb. Then the entire length of the cane and the handle were studded at regular intervals with what the Mir explained were pieces of ibex horns. 123 481

Ibex are found in the hills. They are a wild mountain goat, usually found above the snow line. They are a good sized, hefty animal, standing between 3 and 3½ feet high at the shoulder. They're sturdy beasts as they well must be to live among the highest and most precipitous hills in all creation. For agility there is no animal that can match them. They are crowned with long ridged horns curved backwards, usually black in color. These tough, imperturbable mountain goats reminded me of the people of Hunza and I thought there was a great deal of similarity between them. They are, as far as I know, afraid of nothing. 136

I'm not a hunter—I didn't go after them. Some of the men said they could be found readily. Others said you had to go far up into the mountains in order to find them. But by the number of horns of the ibex I saw in Gilgit, Baltit and all along the route I traversed,

487 I am sure that a people who saw these caravans coming
177 and going could not be called isolated by any stretch of the imagination. They just like their little piece of paradise too well to leave it.

133 *Hunza empties into the Indus.* Two famed writers who should know better . . . or should I say, should have checked more closely . . . made the statement that the Hunza River flows into the Indus. Even a cursory glance at a map would show that the Hunza empties into the Gilgit and the Gilgit empties into the Indus.

585 *Mother-in-law taken along on honeymoon*—This bit of stupidity, or should I say absurdity, appeared in no less than two of the foremost publications in America.

Who ever heard of a honeymoon in Hunza? Not having a Niagara Falls, probably they'd go up and sit on top of Rakaposhi with the mother-in-law between them to cool their ardor.

When the Mir made this statement, he was joking, never believing for a moment that anyone would take such a broad joke as being factual.

• 481 *Hunzans walk* 60 *to* 100 *miles as though it were*
147 *nothing.* In fact, one author stated somewhere that the Hunzans could walk 60 miles easier than she could walk upstairs.

I will readily grant that I believe the Hunzan people are the world's best walkers and well they would have to be, because there just happens to be no other mode of locomotion. I'll even go further and say that all through my travels in that territory I did not once see a Hunzan man, or for that matter a Nagirwal, who appeared to be worn from the rugged walks and climbs. So it is clear that they have tremendous reserves of energy and stamina . . . but let's not go overboard!

486 *Anyone can visit Hunza.* Contrary to the assertion
114 made by one writer that anyone can get into Hunza, I